

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L DHAKA 002491

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: JUNE 1, 2010
TAGS: PHUM PGOV PREL BG
SUBJECT: RAB KILLS AWAMI LEAGUE ACTIVIST, APPARENTLY IN
ERROR

Classified By: P/E Counselor D.C. McCullough, Reason(s): 1.4 (b)

¶1. (SBU) On June 1, local media reported that in Rampura, a suburb of Dhaka, the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) killed Abul Kalam Azad Sumon, a Jubo League (the student wing of the Awami League) member. In a press release, RAB declared that the deceased was notorious criminal Goailya Sumon, and that he was killed in a late night "crossfire" when his criminal colleagues opened fire as he tried to lead police to an arms cache. Goailya Sumon, they said, was wanted on charges of murder, rape and theft.

¶2. (SBU) The media, however, quoting friends and family of the deceased, stated that he was in fact Abul Sumon, aged 22, and had no criminal record. They noted that, according to Abul's father, the Sumon family lives at 259 East Goran, while police listed Goailya Sumon's address as 435 South Goran. In addition, Sumon's rape charge occurred nine years ago, when Abul Sumon was 13. Abul Sumon's father said that plainclothes police picked up his son at his place of work on May 30.

¶3. (SBU) Awami League leader Saber Hussain Chowdhury claimed Abul Sumon was a minor AL activist, had no criminal record, and that his duties consisted of distributing leaflets at a local mosque protesting the construction of a public works project. Local BNP politicians said that Abul Sumon was polite and his killing was "abominable."

¶4. (C) Comment: The AL has claimed from the outset that a significant number of RAB killings were politically motivated, though Chowdhury himself has twice failed to provide us with a promised list of such killings. There appears to be no political or criminal motivation for Sumon's textbook "crossfire" fate, which underscores one of the principal problems with extra-judicial killings as a matter of practice: when mistakes are made, they are impossible to rectify.

CHAMMAS